

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action of September 5, 2008 and further in response to the Advisory Action of January 12, 2009 in which the Examiner asserted that the claims do not distinguish over Verwohit ; and that claims 2-5 are rejected as unpatentable over Verwohit in view of Helger in view of Stanchfied.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below; and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner says that the formation is not exactly at the end of the tube. This characterization is not understood. The claims say "a formation providing a connector portion at the second end of the tube". It is submitted that the formation is at the end of the tube, not just near it or around it. To say it is "exactly" at the end of the tube is somewhat meaningless because it is hard to say where exactly the end of the tube is because the something formed thereat has a dimension. If, for example, the formation is a separate part mounted at the flat end of the tube, then does the formation extend the tube and change where the end is? Applicant has attempted to say that the formation is at the end of the tube, not somewhere between the center of the tube and the end. In the reference, the detents formed in the openings engage the multiple tubes and do so above the bottom of such tubes, and not at the end.

The claim has been clarified to recite first and second ends so it is easy to understand. The claim has also been clarified to say that the formation is deformable and is larger than the through bore, but being deformable it fits through the through hole and engages the bottom surface of the plate with a snap fit. The reference does not do this. First, the detents are formed in the openings in the plate. More than one tube fits in each opening and the detents that engage the tube at a position spaced from the lower end of the tube. In addition, the upper surface of the plate engages the tubes,

whereas in the application, the formation engages the lower side of the plate. The tube in the reference engages the detents which extend into the openings. The claim specifies which surface is involved, namely the bottom surface of the plate; and the claim recites that the formation is at the bottom of the tube and fits through the through hole to snap fit into engagement with the bottom surface of the plate.

The claims have been further clarified to recite that the cross section of the tubes match the cross section of the bores. This is not the case with the reference, as it is clear that the openings in the plate are elongated to accommodate more than one tube in each and to accommodate the sideward motion of the detents when the tubes are inserted. The reference thus does not accommodate tubes in a most efficient or optimum configuration.

It is believed that the claims fully distinguish over the references. The combination suggested by the Examiner does not follow because even if the combination were appropriate, the claimed structure would not follow. The reference does not engage the bottom surface by extending through the through holes.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider his rejection of the claims, the allowance of which is earnestly solicited.

If additional fees are required, the Director is authorized to charge Deposit Account 504147 or credit any overpayment thereto.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. De Luca
/John P. De Luca/
Registration No. 25,505
Attorney for Applicant

John P. De Luca
17420 Ryefield Ct.

Dickerson, MD 20842
301 349 2899
jpd@jpdip.net